



# City of Somerville

## Hiring Process / New Employees

### Purpose

A recruitment and selection policy has been developed to ensure the City of Somerville (COS) fills vacancies with the most qualified candidate.

### Philosophy

The COS believes in equal opportunity in employment practices without discrimination on the grounds of race, religious beliefs, color, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability, mental disability, and ancestry, place of origin, age, marital status, and source of income or family status.

### Responsibility

The Human Resources Department is responsible to ensure employment practices conform to State and Federal Laws and personnel policies. Department Management works in partnership with the candidate selection decisions.

### Recruitment

**Internal Candidates:** The City of Somerville believes in developing existing talent for promotion. When a vacancy occurs, internal department employees will be given consideration prior to advertising an opening. All positions that are not filled by an internal department candidate will be advertised for at least one week on the City website. Non-departmental internal candidates who apply will be selected for an interview if they meet the minimum qualifications for the position.

**External Candidates:** Individuals will be recruited from a geographic area as wide as is necessary to assure obtaining well qualified candidates for various types of positions. In cases where residents of Somerville and non-residents are equally qualified for particular vacant positions, Somerville residents shall receive first consideration, followed by any candidate that offers diversity in any way when filling such vacancies.

- Advertising consists of word of mouth, MMA Website, Monstor.com, City of Somerville website, professional journals, etc.
- Selection process includes interviews by a panel that consists of representatives from the Human Resources Department and the hiring Department. At times representatives from the Mayor's office and Somerstat Department may partake in the process.
- A final interview by the Mayor may be scheduled for positions at the Manager level and higher

Note: To assure credibility of the search, internal and external candidates will undergo the same hiring process.

➤ Public Safety Department personnel (Police and Fire) have their own detailed hiring process.

The City of Somerville fills vacant positions of Police Officers and Firefighters through the Massachusetts Human Resources Division (HRD), Civil Service Unit as required by the State of Massachusetts.

Police Officers and Firefighters are employed through the Massachusetts Human Resources Division (HRD), Civil Service Unit as needed. After the examination and certification of candidates through the Massachusetts Resources Division, which gives preference to Veterans, the City of Somerville utilizes the residency preference



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system allowed by the Massachusetts law for new hires to police officer and firefighter positions. Preference is given to candidates who reside in Somerville for one year prior to the date of the civil service examination. Veteran's preference is provided for appointment to Civil Service positions to veterans as per the Massachusetts Civil Service System. (See COS Civil Service Hiring Policy more detailed information)

### **Qualification Requirements**

At the time a position vacancy occurs, the City Human Resources Department will ask the hiring Manager to update/review the job description and certifications required. The Human Resources Department will review the updated job description and specifications for compliance with job requirements. The Interview Panel will select applicable resumes, interview, and designate their choice of the best candidate for the job. The Mayor's office will conduct final interviews of the top candidate(s), up to 3, for manager level positions and above.

### **Application and Eligibility for Employment**

All candidates applying for employment in the City of Somerville must submit a resume and/or complete an official application form located at the Human Resources Department, or on the City web page, prior to the end of the working day of the closing date specified for the position in the announcement. All candidates who accurately and honestly complete the application forms will be reviewed fairly and equally for the position by the designated authority.

The Human Resources Department has the prerogative to reject any candidate from consideration if they find the following to be characteristic of any applicant; is physically unfit to properly perform the essential functions of the position he or she seeks; is addicted to excessive use of drugs; uses alcohol excessively; made a deliberate false, misleading or exaggerated statement of a material fact; knowingly withheld pertinent information; practiced deception in their application or in attempting to secure employment; has been convicted of a felony in the past five-years; has been proven guilty of any disgraceful conduct; is a member of any organization attempting or planning to overthrow the U.S. Government by force or violence. The Human Resources Department will seek the most competent qualified person that will fit the needs of the organization.

All candidates selected for an interview are required to complete a formal application if they have not done so already.

### **Examinations/Interviews**

Examinations may be administered to candidates applying for job vacancies in the City. All examinations for original classified service positions will be competitive in character. Examinations will be written, oral or both. Standardized tests may be supplied by the Civil Service Commission, a reliable testing agency, or the City depending on the testing deemed necessary for the vacant position by the Human Resources Department. Preliminary screening of candidate's information will be held confidential but final candidate's information will be available to the public pursuant to Mass General Law.



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### Appointment

All vacancies shall be filled by permanent appointment, temporary appointment, promotion, provisional appointment, emergency appointment, seasonal appointment, transfer or demotion. Appointment to a vacancy in the classified service shall be recommended by the Department Head from available qualified candidates and submitted to the Human Resources Department for final action. Some appointments may be subject to confirmation by the Board of Alderman.

### Background Checks

The City of Somerville conducts background checks on candidates post-offer (conditional offer). The City of Somerville may also use a third party administrator to conduct background checks. The type of information that can be collected by the City or this agency includes, but is not limited to, a criminal background check, education, employment history, credit history; web based available information, public information, former employers, and professional / personal references. This process is conducted to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the candidate and determine his/her suitability for employment.

The City of Somerville will ensure that all background checks are held in compliance with applicable federal and state statutes, such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act. All criminal background screens are conducted post-offer (conditional offer). However, as part of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, this information cannot be used as a basis for denying employment, unless it is determined to be job-related.

The City of Somerville reserves the right to make the sole determination concerning information or any employment decision arising out of the background check. The results of the background check will be sent directly to the Director of Human Resources or their designee.

The Director of Human Resources or designee will review the report. If any discrepancies or criminal history are noted, the Human Resources Director or designee will make final determination on hiring.

If the background check is favorable, the Director of Human Resources or designee will notify the hiring manager that the candidate is approved to begin employment. If a background check is returned with unfavorable results, the Director of Human Resources or designee will notify the hiring manager. The Director of Human Resources will contact the candidate to inform him/her that the City of Somerville is rescinding its conditional offer of employment.

In addition to the above, a driving history will be conducted on all candidates conditionally offered a position that requires the need to operate a motor vehicle regardless if it is a city vehicle or a personal vehicle.

### SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE FOLLOWING IS REQUIRED:

**EMPLOYMENT CONTINGENCY:** Background checks, physical, driving history (if applicable), MA State Ethics quiz, and drug screen are to be processed after a conditional offer of employment has been extended to the applicant. Note: The offer of employment is contingent upon the successful results of all background checks. Any candidate with a positive drug test will be immediately removed from the hiring process and will



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not be considered for employment with the City of Somerville for one year from the date of the positive drug test.

**NEW HIRES:** Background checks, reference checks, physical, possible driving history, MA State Ethics Quiz and drug screens are required for all new hires. This includes all full-time, part-time, seasonal and temporary employees. The background check, physical, driving history (if applicable), Ethics Quiz and drug screen must be completed and results verified before any employee begins work. At no time should an employee begin work until the Director of Human Resources or designee has verified results of the background check, driving history (if applicable), physical, and drug screen.

**REHIRES:** A background check, reference checks, physical, driving history (if applicable), MA State Ethics Quiz and drug screen is required to be performed for all rehired employees that have been separated for the City of Somerville for longer than 90 calendar days.

**AUTHORIZATION BY APPLICANT:** The candidate must authorize the Background checks, physical, driving history, and drug screen by completing the appropriate forms. The criminal record checks are done by having the applicant complete the C.O.R.I. form. This form is available to the applicant at the Human Resources office.

**Note:** All applicants must complete an Application for Employment and C.O.R.I. form as this is required to be submitted to the third party administrator conducting the background check.

### New Employee Requirements

All new permanent part-time and full-time employees may be subject to a physical and/or psychological examination as a condition of employment. The examination shall be at the expense of the City by a physician appointed by the Human Resources Department. The examining physician shall advise as to whether or not, in their opinion, the applicant is physically qualified to perform the duties of the position for which application has been made. The certification required hereunder shall be in such form as the Director of Human Resources shall determine.

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of your right to work in the United States. Prior to your first day of work you will be asked to provide original documents verifying your right to work and, as required by federal law, to sign federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form. If you, at any time, cannot verify your right to work in the United States, the City of Somerville may need to terminate your employment. These forms are available in the Human Resources office.

Prior to or on your first working day, you will be asked to complete employment paperwork in the City Human Resources office. Copies of documentation will be required for this paperwork to be completed. You will be required to present any of the following listed documents: your state issued driver's license, social security card and/or United States issued passport.



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### Conflict of Interest

All candidates will be required to complete the states ethics quiz at <http://www.muniprogram.state.ma.us/> prior to their first day of work.

### Benefits

The City of Somerville offers health insurance, life insurance, dental insurance, retirement plans and other benefits to permanent full and part-time employees working more than 20 hours per week. Please see the benefits section on the City's Human Resources Department web page for detailed up to date information.

### Anniversary Date

The first day you report to work is your official anniversary date. Your anniversary date is used to compute various conditions and benefits.

### Probationary Period

The probationary period shall be regarded as an integral part of the new employee process and shall be utilized by supervisors and Department Heads for closely observing the employee's work and conduct, for securing the most effective adjustment of a new employee, or an employee to a new position, and for rejecting any employee whose performance does not meet the required work standards.

Every person appointed to a full-time or part-time classified position shall be required to successfully complete a probationary period to enable the Department Head to observe the employee's ability to perform the various principal duties pertaining to the position. The probationary period shall begin immediately upon assumption of duties or promotion. Depending on the position, the non-union guide book and Collective Bargain Agreements outline the probationary period time length. Thirty calendar days prior to the end of the probationary period the Department Head may recommend that the probationary period should end at that time, the probationary period be extended, or the employee either be retained as a permanent employee or be dismissed. If an employee's job is temporarily interrupted during the probationary period, upon return, they will be required to complete the remainder of the probationary period and given credit for the time already served.

Note: Employee must maintain a position within a department for a one (1) year period before becoming eligible to bid/apply into a posted position in another department, unless waived by the Director of Human Resources.

Approved by: Walter M. Parker Title: Director of Human Resources

Date: ~~July 8, 2015~~ Revised May 2, 2016